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AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
INHABITANTS OF NOTTINGHAM:
OCCASIONED
BY A LETTER
LATELY SENT TO THE
MAYOR,
AND SOME OTHER MEMBERS OF THE
CORPORATION
OF THAT TOWN.

By GILBERT WAKEFIELD, B. A.
And Late FELLOW of JESUS-COLLEGE, Cambridge.

*Thou Hypocrite! first cast out the Beam out of thine own
Eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the Mote out of
thy Brother's Eye.—JESUS.*

*Who art thou that judgest another Man's Servant? To
his own Master he standeth or falleth.—PAUL.*

*Let all Bitterness, and Wrath, — be put away from you,
with all Malice.—PAUL.*

NOTTINGHAM,
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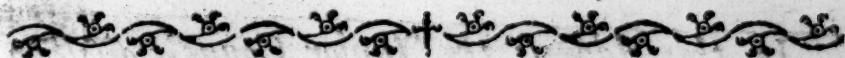
January 7th 1790. Mr. Chamber
applied for an information in the
nature of a quo warranto, against
Mr. Smith, to shew by what autho-
rity he exercises the office of May-
or of Nottingham, not having qua-
lified himself by receiving the
sacrament within the time
prescribed by law. A rule to
shew cause was granted accord-
ingly.

February 12th following the rule
was made absolute.

Mr. Smith gave up the office
before the expiration of his year.



13.4/58



ADVERTISEMENT.

The following is a Copy of one of the Letters mentioned in the Title-Page of this Pamphlet :

WILLIAM SMITH, Esq;

MAYOR,

NOTTINGHAM.

NOTTINGHAM, 21st October, 1789.

THE Junior Council present their most respectful Compliments to the Mayor of Nottingham : take Leave to inform him, 'tis with Pain they have observed, that a total Disregard to the qualifying Laws for Offices has for some time taken Place in this Town. They therefore give him this timely Information, that if he neglects to qualify for his Office, they shall feel themselves obliged to enforce a Law, which they think founded in Wisdom.*

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* N. B. This Body consists of the six following Gentlemen : Thomas Frost, Esq; Cornelius Launder, Esq; John Morris, Esq; Mr. Thomas Rawson, in Houndf-gate, Mr. John Alleyne, and Mr. Sterland.

*In this Address the Junior Council disclaim
the smallest Animosity to the Mayor. They take
up this Affair upon public Ground---In De-
fence of the Laws and Constitution of their
Country.*



AN ADDRESS

TO THE

Inhabitants of Nottingham, &c.

FELLOW CITIZENS;

IN whatever Light we may severally view the Letter prefixed to this Pamphlet, which will be very different, I presume, according to our different Habits of Life and Modes of thinking; it shall furnish me with an Opportunity of communicating my Thoughts to you upon Subjects, which probably very few of us have considered with sufficient Seriousness; and of suggesting some Ideas, which may not have presented themselves before to those, who are constantly engaged in the Busineses of Life, and have but little Leisure for Reflexions of this Nature. I shall think my Pains laudably bestowed, and incur, if it should so fall out, whatever Odium with Pleasure, if by any Exertions I can rectify the Disposition, inform the Understanding, or enlarge the Heart of a single Individual among you. I shall lay my Observations before you, as they naturally arise from the Subject, and in the plainest Language. Reputation is not my Object, but your Information and Welfare only. Should I express myself with a Warmth and Energy inspired by the Subject, do not mistake, as many of cool and timid Feelings are but too apt to do, *Earnestness* for

Passion; but consider the great Importance of the Argument, which cannot be debated with Tameness and Indifference; listen with Patience; judge with Candour; and follow with Spirit the free Dictates of your own Understandings.

Many of you, I dare say, are unacquainted with the Nature of the *Test-Act*, to which our *Junior Council* are endeavouring to compel the *Mayor* and some of the *Corporation* to conform. This Act, which was passed in the Reign of *Charles the 2d*, “ directs, among other Things,
 “ all *Officers civil* and military, within six Calendar Months after their Admission to receive
 “ the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, according
 “ to the Usage of the Church of *England*, in some
 “ public Church, immediately after divine Service,
 “ and to deliver into Court a Certificate
 “ thereof signed by the Minister and Church-
 “ Warden, and also to prove the same by two
 “ credible Witnesses; upon Forfeiture of 500l.
 “ and Disability to hold the said Office.”

Such is the Injunction of this Act; and the Intention of it professes to be, “ the Security of
 “ the established Church against Perils of *Non-*
 “ *Conformists* of all Denominations.”

Now it is well known, that our present chief Magistrate, and many of his Brethren in Authority, are *Dissenters* from the Worship of the *established Church*, and addicted to their own religious Faith with as much Attachment, and upon Inducements as conscientious, as a Church-of-England.



Man to his. You see then the Difficulty, to which these Gentlemen are reduced by this Determination of the *Junior Council*. They must either conform to a Ceremony against their Consciences, and thus offend the supreme Being by a profane Prostitution of a most serious and solemn Act—or pay a Penalty of 500l. and give up an Office, to which they have been chosen by the proper Authority—or suffer the Consequences of a Prosecution. How far this Conduct of the *Junior Council* is defensible upon any Principles of Religion, or Liberality, or even of Common-Sense, you will be better enabled to decide by the Assistance of the following Remarks: which I do not wish you to regard further than they appear just and reasonable to your Apprehension.

This *Test-Act*, you will perceive from a slight Examination of it, rests for its Support upon *two* Principles, and must stand or fall with rational Men by the Truth or Falshood of these its Supporters. The *first* Principle is evidently this:

1. That the *Magistrate*, or ruling Power of a Nation, has a Right to enquire into the *Religious Opinions* of his Subjects, to prescribe Rules for the Regulation of these Opinions, and to demand a Declaration of them.

The *second* Principle is this:

2. That the religious Faith of our Governors, or that established by Law in the *Church of England*, is the true Religion delivered in the Scrip-

tures, by *Moses* and the *Prophets* in the *Old Testament*, and by *Christ* and his *Apostles* in the *New*.

These *two* Principles, I say, are the Foundation upon which the *Test-Act* is builded; and, if the Foundation be sandy, the Building of Course must tumble down. So far no Man can oppose us.— Let me once more, before I begin, entreat your most earnest and dispassionate Attention, whilst I enquire into the Merits of both the Propositions above stated.

I. The Arrogance, the Absurdity, and the Falshood of the first, viz. that “the Magistrate &c.” may be undeniably made out in such a Variety of Ways, that I am only perplexed how to select the plainest and most forcible of the numerous Arguments, which present themselves to my Notice.

1. Every Man, who consults his own Mind, must feel an immediate Conviction, that he is not so far Master of his Faculties as to believe or disbelieve any Point at Pleasure. He is compelled, as a reasonable Creature, to accommodate his Belief, and to receive Conviction, according to the Measure of Evidence presented to his Understanding. As no Kings and Parliaments upon Earth can persuade or force you to think it Midnight, when your Eye tells you that it is Noon-Day; so, when the Eye of your Mind perceives the Truth, or Falshity of any Proposition, no human Power, not even yourselves, can alter or controul your Conviction in this Instance. You may prevari-

cate indeed; and attempt to impose upon yourselves or others; but Prevarication will not confound the Truth of Things; and counteract the unconquerable Efficacy of your secret Feelings. Is it possible then for Language to expose with sufficient Powers of Expression that Folly, by which the Magistrate would force Conviction, and inculcate Truth, not by the Strength of Arguments, but the Severities of Law?

But these Attempts of the Magistrate are not merely *foolish* and *ineffectual*, beginning in Error and ending in Vanity; but presumptuous and profane.

The supreme Being has gifted his Creature Man with certain Faculties, capable of particular Exertions, and susceptible of Impressions by Means adapted to their Nature. The Faculty, which distinguishes us from the brute Creation, we call *Reason*; and this can be improved only by such Methods as are suitable to that Sense and Understanding, of which we are all conscious in our several Proportions. But will Confinement in a Prison, or the Payment of a Fine, enlighten your Understandings, or strengthen your Conviction of the Truths of *Christianity*, or any other Truths whatever? And does not the Man, who employs such preposterous Means for these Ends, offer Violence to human Nature, and resist and subvert, as far as he can, those Laws, which the Almighty has established for the Regulation of his Creatures? Certainly it is no less Guilt, than

that of an audacious Rebellion against the divine Administration to oppose his Constitution of Things, to fetter that Energy of the Mind, which God has made free, and which will continue uncontrollable, as long as the Creator continues more powerful than his Creatures, and able to support his own System against the arbitrary and spiteful Interference of weak and wicked Men.

2. Again : Whatever Power possesses a Right to prescribe Laws for my Conduct, must also have a Right to sit in Judgment upon that Conduct, and punish my Disobedience to his Laws. This is manifest beyond Dispute. Therefore, if the *King* and *Parliament* have a Right to regulate my Faith, and to prescribe that System of Morality and Religion, which I ought to believe and practise, it most certainly follows, that my secret Thoughts, my private Meditations, and every Action of my Life, all which should be conducted under the immediate and perpetual Influence of religious Principles, should submit to the Examination and Sentence of the same Tribunal. But surely no *Christian* need be told, that God, who alone knoweth and searcheth the Heart, has committed this Office not to Kings or any earthly Potentates, but to his Son, whom he hath appointed to judge, what no *Kings* and *Parliaments* can ever know, *every secret Thing, whether it be good or evil,** when he shall come in the *Glory of his Father with the holy Angels.†*

* Eccles. xii. 14.—† Mark viii. 38.

How *Magistrates* in the mean Time ought to conduct themselves with Respect to this Business of religious Opinion, which breaks out into no Acts of Violence against his rightful Authority, our Saviour himself hath declared in the most positive and explicit Language. In the Parable of the Tares*, when the Servants said unto the Householder, *Wilt thou that we go and gather them up?* He replies to their indiscreet Officiousness: *Nay: lest, while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them.* LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER UNTIL THE HARVEST: *and in the Time of Harvest, I will say to the Reapers, Gather ye together first the Tares, and bind them in Bundles to burn them; but gather the Wheat into my Barn.*

The Sense and Drift of this Parable are so extremely obvious, that I shall not stay to make any further Application of it, but leave it to your own Understandings.

3. Further: We believe, that the holy Scriptures contain every thing necessary to the Faith and Practice of a *Christian*. We are exhorted to *search these Scriptures*†—and *even of our own selves to judge what is right*‡: and many other Declarations to the same Purpose might be produced.—Now such Exhortations, if they have any Meaning at all, plainly imply, that every Man is to examine the Bible for himself, and is left at full Liberty to embrace that System of religious Faith.

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* Matt. xiii. 24—31. † John v. 39. ‡ Luke xii. 57.

which seems upon the whole the best to his own Judgement. But, if we were under an Obligation to wait for an *Act of Parliament* before we could form our Opinions upon the Subjects of Religion and venture to accept *Christianity*, the Exhortations of *Christ* and his *Apostles* with Regard to this Point would have been expressed in a very different Manner, and not addressed, you may be sure, in such liberal and gentle Terms to their Disciples.

But this Supposition of the *Magistrate's* Prerogative in the Affairs of Religion is contradicted also by the uniform Practice of our Lord, who constantly, cried out: *Who so hath Ears to hear, let him hear* *: making his Appeal to the native Candour of his Audience, and to the unprejudiced Feelings of their Heart; disclaiming all Force, but that of Argument; and exerting no Influence, but that of Truth.

Add to these Considerations, that *the Son of God* is said to *make us free* † by the Gospel:— That Gospel itself is emphatically stiled, *the perfect Law of LIBERTY* ‡; and *Christians* are delivered thereby into the GLORIOUS LIBERTY of the Sons of God§. I forbear quoting many more similar Passages from the Scriptures, all of them fundamentally and totally inconsistent with any Jurisdiction, but that of God himself, over the Minds and Consciences of Men. Such a Slavery

* Matt. xiii. 9. † John viii. 36. ‡ James i. 25.

§ Rom. viii. 21.

of the Soul would be more iniquitous, and ten-times more insufferable to the Dignity of a noble Spirit, ten-times more ignominious and galling to an *Englishman*, than the abject and forlorn Condition of a *Negro Slave*.

4. You may remember also, that our Saviour, in his Examination before *Pontius Pilate*, declared in plain Terms, *My Kingdom is not of this World**; "it has no Connection with that changeable Policy, and those interested Views, by which the perishable Kingdoms of the Earth are influenced and supported: but is conducted by Principles conformable to that Throne, on which it is established—the Hearts and Consciences of Mankind." This *fine Gold* † will not incorporate with the *Hay and Stubble* ‡ and base Materials of human *Laws and Establishments*. Religion is a Covenant between Man and his Maker, a Transaction of the Heart; whose *Praise*, or *Blame*, in this Respect, is *not of Man but of God*§.

And, in my Opinion, the Apostle *Paul*, who was animated by a noble Spirit of Independance, and shewed himself a most zealous Advocate on every Occasion for the religious Liberties of Mankind; *St. Paul*, I say, appears to me to have had in View this Declaration of his Master,—*My Kingdom is not of this World*,—when he speaks of the good Confession, which *Christ Jesus* witnessed before *Pontius Pilate*||. Surely it was a Declaration

* John xviii. 36. † Psalm xix. 10. ‡ 1 Cor. iii. 12.

§ Rom. ii. 29. || 1 Tim. vi. 13.

worthy of the particular Notice and Commendation of the Apostle: worthy of being written, not *on Paper with Pen and Ink**, but with the *graving Tool* of God himself, *on the fleshy Tables of the Heart†*.

Remember therefore, my Fellow-Citizens, to *stand fast in the Liberty, with which Christ hath made you free†*; and in Defence of your Conduct against all the Arguments for all the *Test-Acts* and *civil Establishments of Religion* upon Earth, make this short Reply—MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD.

But it is Time for me to proceed to the Consideration of the *second Proposition*, upon which the *Test-Act* is founded: viz.

ii. That the Religion of the *Church of England* is the true Religion of the Scriptures.

Upon this Head also I shall endeavour to be as short as possible, and to detain you no longer than is necessary for the Establishment and Illustration of the Subject in Hand. I shall then leave you *as wise Men to judge what I say§*, and to act accordingly: taking this Observation with you, that Religion is no Trifle, no variable unimportant Thing, which we may change and modify with as much Indifference, and as often, as our Dress; but that Rule of Life, by which we

* John Epist. ii. 12. iii. 13. † 2 Cor. iii. 3.

† Gal. v. i. § 1 Cor. x. 15.

shall be sentenced at the last Day to unspeakable Happiness, or to *everlasting Shame and Contempt**, in the Presence of Men and Angels.

1. *Moses*, in a Tone of unusual Earnestness and Spirit, exclaims to the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, *Hear, O! Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord*†. And our Saviour bears his Testimony to the Truth and Importance of this Doctrine, as you may see in Mark xii. 29. — The Prophet *Zechariab* declares‡, that a Day will come, when *the Lord shall be King over all the Earth*; when *there shall be ONE LORD and his Name ONE*. *St. Paul* repeatedly asserts, that *to us there is but ONE GOD the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ*§. As for our Saviour himself, even after his Ascension, when *John fell at his Feet to worship him*||, he refused this Homage, which is due only to his Father: *See thou do it not*, says he; *I am THY FELLOW-SERVANT, and OF THY BRETHREN*¶. For it is manifest from *Revelations* i. 11. 20. that the Angel, who talked with *John*, was no other than *Jesus* himself. But I need not be anxious upon this Point. Every Page of Scripture is full of this sublime and essential Article of Faith; and no Subject whatever is more frequently inculcated, and more earnestly insisted upon, by our Lord himself in all his Discourses, than his Subordination to the Father, and his absolute Dependence upon Him for all his Powers. In this capital

* Dan. xii. 2. † Deut. vi. 4. ‡ C. xiv. ver. 9.

§ 1 Cor. viii. 4. 6. || 1 Tim. ii. 5. &c. || Rev. xix. 10.

¶ As Heb. ii. 11. 17.

Truth of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Revelations the wisest and most virtuous Philosophers, both of ancient and modern Times, have uniformly coincided, as a Doctrine perfectly agreeable to the clearest Deductions of undepraved Reason, and to every Principle of Common-Sense: so that if one or two Passages of doubtful Construction and of weak Authority can be produced from the Scriptures in Contradiction to these plain Texts, you may be sure either that they are misinterpreted, or spurious: yes; as sure that Reason and Religion cannot possibly be at Variance---that the GOD of TRUTH cannot CONTRADICT HIMSELF. Nay, further: If any System of Religion should teach a Doctrine inconsistent with the UNITY of God, an Article of Faith established by such explicit and abundant Evidence, this single Circumstance would counterbalance all other Arguments in Favour of that System: and would prove, that such Religion could never come from *Jehovah, who cannot lie*---with whom is no Variableness nor Shadow of Turning†:—who is A JEALOUS GOD‡, and will not give his Glory to another§.

But what does the *Church of England*, with whom all Officers are required to communicate, teach her Members upon this Subject? She tells them, that “the Father is God, the Son is God, and “the Holy Ghost is God||:” that our Saviour

* Heb. vi. 18. † James i. 17. ‡ Exod. xx. 5.

§ Isaiah xlii. 8.

|| The *Athanasian Creed*; the 1st, 2d and 5th *Articles of Religion*, and the *Book of Common Prayer* throughout.

“*Christ* was *very God* and *very Man*,” or to make Use of equivalent Words, that he possessed all the natural Weaknesses of *Mortality*, and all the infinite and incomprehensible Perfections of the *Godhead* at the SAME TIME. A Proposition, than which, I think, distempered Reason could not possibly have devised any Thing more tremendously shocking, and more superlatively absurd. It is indeed the very Perfection of Blasphemy and Folly.

But stop: some zealous Son of the *Church* is coming forward to tell you, with a grave Face and in a serious Tone, that this Account, which I have given you, is “a most barefaced and scandalous Misrepresentation of the Matter: that our *Church* maintains indeed, that *the Father is God*, *the Son is God*, and *the Holy Ghost is God*; but that these THREE put together make but ONE God.” What can I say more? If your *Faith*, or rather (you must excuse the Freedom of the Expression) if your *Credulity*, is of a Size to receive such a monstrous Proposition, no Arguments, that I have in Store, will find Admission into your Understandings. Answer me, however, a single Question. Should a Man tell you that there are *three Churches* in *Nottingham*, *St. Mary’s*, *St. Peter’s*, and *St. Nicholas’s*; and in the same Breath insist upon it with a solemn Countenance, that these *three Churches* are only *one Church*; could you believe him serious? Would you not imagine, that he was proposing to you some *Riddle* for a Trial of your Ingenuity; or took you for

a downright Ideot, by offering such an Insult to your Understanding, in asserting that *three* is *one*, and *one* is *three*?

This is one Specimen of the Agreement between the Doctrines of the *Church of England* and the Scriptures; that *Church*, which exacts, notwithstanding, a Conformity to her Worship under Pain of certain Dangers, and Penalties, and Disqualifications, extremely prejudicial to our Interests as Members of Society, tending to estrange us from the Good-Will and affectionate Intercourse of our Fellow-Citizens, and depriving us of those Privileges and Encouragements, which are the Claim and Birth-Right of all peaceable Citizens and good Subjects.

It will not be amiss, as we have entered upon this interesting Subject, to give another Specimen or two of the Doctrines of our *Church*; that you may be the better enabled to judge of the Reasonableness of her Pretensions to evangelical Purity in Faith and Worship, and, in Consequence thereof, of her Decency and Propriety in enforcing her Opinions on Mankind. This is a copious Argument: but I shall confine myself to very few Particulars.

2. In a System of Faith, called the *Apostle's Creed*, and in her *third Article*, the *Church of England* asserts, that *Christ descended into Hell*. This, like the preceding Doctrine of a *Trinity in Unity*, is an unclean Remnant of the Garment of *Popery*, from which but a few Shreds only were cut away

at the Reformation; and, like the same Doctrine too, utterly unknown to the first Ages of Christianity. What Business Christ had in Hell, a Place of Punishment, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*—Christ, who knew no Sin†—who finished the Work † given him by God—the beloved Son, in whom the Father was well pleased‡: what Business, I say, our Lord Jesus had there, I never yet could understand; and should be glad to learn from those, who have been more successful in searching the Scriptures for this Doctrine, than myself. It is very unseasonable in us to blame Papists for sending good Christians to Purgatory, when we Protestants send there without Scruple the Lamb of God himself.

3. Original Sin is another Doctrine of the Church of England; by which we are taught, that "every Person born into this World deserveth God's Wrath and Damnation¶." This Notion has no better Foundation than in some Passages of Scripture, most grossly misunderstood, as all Interpreters of any Learning will readily allow. But what Occasion is there at all for Learning to decide upon a Point, which the Scriptures will enable us to settle at once with no other Interpreter than plain Common-Sense? Does not our Lord exhort his Disciples to become as little Children**? Did he not take up little Children in his

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* Matt. xxv. 41. † 1 Pet. ii. 22. ‡ John xvii. 4.

§ Matt. iii. 17. || John i. 29. ¶ Article the 9th.

** Matt. xviii. 3.

Arms, put his Hands upon them, and bleſs them? Could he poſſibly have recommended Infants to our Imitation for *Innocence* and *Simplicity*, if they were born in *Sin*, and worthy of *eternal Damnation*? Monſtrous abominable Doctrines! execrable by every Parent! a wicked Libel upon *God* and *Chriſt*, and human Nature. But tell me, is not the Precept and Example of your Saviour more worthy of Regard, than the Opinions of ſuperſtitious and ignorant Interpreters of the Scriptures? In ſhort, I leave the Matter to this Iſſue between you and the Church of England, in the Words of *Elijah* to the People: *Hew lang halt ye between two Opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.**

4. I ſhall content myſelf with one Inſtance more of the Agreeableneſs of the Church of England Doctrines with the Scriptures: and this ſhall be brought from the *Sacrament*, as it is called, which is impoſed upon all *Officers civil and military* by the *Teſt-Act*.

The Scriptures inform us, that the *Lord's Supper* was appointed by *Chriſt* himſelf, and, in Words as plain and precise as Language can adopt, merely for the *Commemoration* of his *Death* upon the *Croſs* for the *Sins* of Mankind. Nor is any Benefit whatſoever annexed either by *Jeſus* or his *Apoſtles* to the Celebration of this ſimple Ceremony, but what may be reaſonably expected from a ſerious and conſcientious Performance of

* 1 Kings xviii. 21.

any religious Duty. If our Church will maintain, that some *extraordinary Benefits* are annexed to this Rite, let her Sons produce me the Passages of Scripture, which propound this Doctrine: for I can as well admit Infallibility in a *Pope*, who is *always in the Right*, as in an established *Church*, which is *never in the Wrong*; as I see no Difference between them. The same Respect is due in all Cases to mere *Pharisaical Traditions* and *Commandments of Men**.

But what Ideas of this Institution does the *Church of England* inculcate upon her Sons? Instead of adhering to the plain Account of the *Evangelists*† and *St. Paul*‡, she distinguishes the *Lord's Supper* by the strange Denomination of HOLY MYSTERIES§; as if something most inconceivably dark and solemn were comprehended in it. Hence the Minds of the Generality of her Members are saddened by a superstitious Horror at the Idea of Communion with the Body and Blood of *Christ* under the Symbols of Bread and Wine, employed for no other Purpose than for that of a more lively and affecting Representation to the Senses of the Body, which was broken, and the Blood, which was shed, for our Benefit.

Not only so, but *the receiving of the Sacrament*, to use their own Phrase, is holden forth as an Atonement of all our Sins; a Blessing no where promised in the *Law* or the *Gospel*, but to Repent-

* *Math. xv. 9.* † *Luke xxii. 19.* ‡ *1 Co. xii. 24.*

§ In the Communion Service.

ance and Reformation: and we are exhorted by the *Church* to confess our Sins, and open our Grief, that we may receive ABSOLUTION truly from the *Minister*. This I can myself consider in no other Light than that of an impious Usurpation of the Authority of God, whose sole Prerogative it is to *forgive Sins*; a Prerogative indeed sometimes delegated for great Purposes to *Apostles* commissioned by him, and able to work *Signs and Wonders* in Proof of their Commission.

I might point out some other superstitious Abuses of this Ceremony in the *Church of England*; but it is a most unpleasant Employment to expose the Absurdities of our Brother-Christians, and what no Man, who values the Good-Will of his Fellow-Citizens, would undertake but from a superior Regard to Truth, and an earnest Desire of diffusing its Benefits in Society; which are above all Price.

I have now gone through my intended Examination of the *two* Points, on which the Propriety of the *Test-Act* must be founded. Some other miscellaneous Observations, suggested by the Letter of the *Junior Council*, shall conclude this Address.

The *Insufficiency* of the *Test-Act* to accomplish its *End* may justly be insisted upon, and is manifest indeed from the slightest Consideration. Its Intention was, as we have seen, “the Security
“ of the *Church* from Perils of *Non-Conformists*
“ of every Denomination.” Many a conscien-

tious *Dissenter* from the *Church*, we cannot doubt, qualifies for his Office from an Idea that a Compliance for once in this single Instance is of no great Moment; or from other Motives, which I cannot be supposed able to know and enumerate. But does this *Dissenter* become hereby more friendly to the *Church*, less likely to oppose her Interests, and thus secure her from those Perils so greatly apprehended by her Members? No such Thing: his Mind suffers no Alteration in this Respect. If any Effect arises, it is that of Resentment at such an unreasonable Constraint on his Inclinations, and so unjustifiable an Oppression of his Conscience. This Argument is still more forcible in the Case of a *Dissenter* so commendably scrupulous, as to forego an Office in Society in Preference to such Compliance.

On the other Hand, a *Dissenter* of no Principle, like abandoned Characters of every other Denomination, conforms to the Discipline of this *Church*, or any *Church*, with perfect Indifference, whenever his worldly Interest can be promoted by it. But in what Sense can the *Church* be a Gainer by such a Conformity, or secured from any Perils?

Nothing, therefore, can be more undeniably evident, than that the *Church-Establishment* is delivered from no *Peril* in either of these Instances, and that the *Test-Act* is a mere Nullity with Respect to the Object, which it professes to have in View.

But, in the mean Time, is it possible for a Minister of the *Church of England*, who reflects with becoming Seriousness upon the Dignity of his Function, and the Solemnity of a significant and pathetic Rite, instituted by *Christ* himself at such an awful Period; can any *Clergyman*, I say, under these Circumstances, administer the Body and Blood of his Redeemer to one, who is either a lukewarm Communicant or a vile Prevaricator, without being shocked at being made the Instrument of such an abominable Profanation; and without crying out with *Moses*, “ *I exceedingly, fear and quake**?” And yet this *Clergyman* is bound at his Peril to comply!

Such is the Embarrassment, my Fellow-Citizens! into which the Generosity of the *Junior Council* is desirous of bringing the worthy Pastors of our Town! But I would fain hope that a little Reflection will lead to an Acknowledgement of their Error. Certainly every human Person would be sorry to drive his bitterest Enemy into a Difficulty like this.

Another Observation will place the *Test-Act* in a very ridiculous Point of View. What is *Non-Conformity* in *England* is in *Scotland* the *established Church*; and we of the *Church of England*, as soon as we pass the *Tweed*, become *Dissenters*; for during our Passage across that River, we are neither one Thing nor another, neither *Dissenters* nor *Churchmen*, but a Mongrel-Kind of *Christian*, for

* Heb. xii. 21.

whom our Language has not yet found a Name. And is it not a great Hardship upon our *North-Country* Brethren, when they journey, as *Abraham* did, *towards the South-Country**, that they must be forced to renounce *their* religious Forms for *our's*, or give up the pleasing Objects for which they came among us, and to which they are entitled as well as ourselves? But *Truth* has nothing particularly to do with *national Establishments* of Religion. It is to *Force* alone, that they owe Support: and let but the Tide of popular Fury once be turned, and a *good Christian* under the *Protectorate* starts up in a Moment an *incurable* Heretic at the *Restoration*. Can your Imagination conceive a more insupportable Insult on the Sense and Reason of Mankind?

Your *Common-Council*, my Friends! think the *Test-Act* "founded on Wisdom." They would, I am sure, be doing a great and public Service, and myself among the first would be forward to acknowledge the Obligation, if they would condescend to communicate to their less knowing Brethren those *strong Arguments*, which have so happily led their Understandings to this Conclusion. It is selfish, it is ungenerous, nay, it is unchristian, thus to *hide their Candle under a Bushel*. Let them place it on the *Candlestick*, that it may give *Light to all that are in the House*.

Your "*Junior-Council* disclaim", they tell us, "all Animosity" on this Occasion: they are

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* Gen. xx. 1.

actuated merely by a public Spirit,—by a Regard
 for “ the Laws and Constitution of their Coun-
 try.” They know their own Motives best;
 and, for my Part, I think it would be uncandid
 to disbelieve them. Nevertheless, merely as a
 Subject of amusing *Speculation*, upon the Suppo-
 sition that their Motives had not been avowed,
 to what Cause might a suspicious Enquirer into
 their Conduct have possibly attributed this Mea-
 sure at the present Juncture? This uncharitable
Speculator would, doubtless, derive a Solution in
 his own Mind from the Event of a late Election.
 “ The trivial Inferiority of 22 to 26,” he would
 say within himself, “ has filled them with an over-
 weening Conceit of their own Strength and In-
 fluence, and has encouraged them, without
 waiting the slow Process of *Elections*, to a speedy
 Overthrow of their Antagonists by dislodging
 them from their Stations with the Artillery of
 the *Church*. But the *Junior-Council* would do
 well,” he would rejoin, (for the Reader should
 remember, that a *feñitious* Character is speaking)
 they would do well to consider, that most of
 those Gentlemen, who, by a Train of Circum-
 stances unforeseen and unconcerted, were acci-
 dentally joined with the *Junior Council* in the
 Support of the same Candidate, are endued
 with a Liberality of Manners, which will make
 them among the first to express their Indigna-
 tion at this violent and unjust Procedure. They
 opposed the successful Candidates upon Mo-
 tives totally distinct, as it should seem, from
 those of the *Junior Council*. It was no Predi-
 lection for *Toryism* or *Church Dominion*, that en-

" gaged *them* in this Contest; but a Persuasion,
 " whether well founded or not, that our present
 " Magistracy have not exerted themselves with a
 " Warmth and Patriotism, that would have done
 " them Honour, in promoting those Schemes of
 " public Utility and Convenience, so suitable to
 " their Station, and so practicable by their Influ-
 " ence and Resources. Nor, I apprehend, were
 " the Operations of these Gentlemen directed so
 " much by any Impressions of *Whig* or *Tory* upon
 " their Minds, as by a pure Desire of advancing
 " such liberal and respectable Characters, as were
 " likely to engage with Spirit in furthering the
 " Welfare of their Native Town, and the Benefit
 " of Society at large. If such Reflexions as these
 " had occurred to the *Junior Council*, they would
 " not have discovered any Reason to congratu-
 " late themselves upon the flattering Issue of the
 " late Contest."

However, let your *Junior Council* be as free from
 Animosity, as they wish us to think them; a small
 Share of Experience and a very moderate Portion
 of Understanding might have informed these Gen-
 tlemen, that Compulsion of this Nature never
 can answer any valuable Purpose; and never did,
 since the Foundation of the World. Irritation
 on one Part, Acrimony on the other; and in-
 flamed Antipathy on both, are invariably the
 blessed Fruits of every Sort of Persecution.

And a very slender Proficiency indeed must that Man have made in the Study of CHRISTIANITY, who has not learnt, how inconsistent such Roughness is with the Spirit of his Religion: a Religion, which breathes Nothing but mutual Forbearance, Meekness, Gentleness, Love, and Peace. *Lord!* said the Disciples, *wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?* But Jesus turned, and rebuked them, and said: *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of: for the Son of Man is not come to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them**. Our Henry vii. always began his Treaties with this memorable Sentence, “When *Christ* came into the World, *Peace* was sung; when he left the World, *Peace* was bequeathed.” See Luke ii. 14. John xiv. 27.

It is truly lamentable for a feeling Heart to observe amongst Mankind so little Consideration for the Ease and Happiness of others! so great a Display of Conceit, Intolerance, and Selfishness! such an Insensibility to the generous Precepts and universal Benevolence of the Gospel! such a Blindness to our own Faults and Imperfections! so little Indulgence to the Wants and Weaknesses of poor distressed human Nature!—Oh! that the Day would come, when every grosser Passion should be burnt up on the Altar of *Christian* Love! when all Hatred and Animosity should be rooted from the Earth! when the Spirit of Faction

* Luke ix. 54—57.

should be swallowed up in Unanimity and patriotic Virtue! when the great and only Object of Ambition among FELLOW-CITIZENS should be—
THE GOOD OF THE COMMUNITY.

NOTTINGHAM, October 26, 1789.



POSTSCRIPT.

Upon referring to *Blackstone*, who is my Authority for what is advanced on the Subject of the *Test-Act*, I believe myself to be in an Error, when I rank the Members of a *Corporation* under the Head of *civil Officers*. This seems not to be the Language of the Law. The *Act* immediately connected with the Occasion of this Address, is the *Corporation-Act*; by “ which no Person can
“ be legally elected to any Office in a Corpora-
“ tion, unless, within a Twelvemonth before, he
“ has received the Sacrament of the Lord’s Sup-
“ per according to the Rights of the *Church* of
“ *England*; or, in Default of this, such Election
“ shall be void.”—No Sort of Difference, with
Regard to any Arguments employed in this Ad-
dress, is occasioned by this Mistake upon a Sub-
ject of Law, with which I declare myself totally
unacquainted; as it has been my Endeavour ra-
ther to acquire a Knowledge of the wise and
liberal Sentiments than of the Nonsense and In-
justice of Mankind.

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